(c) The proposal is under active consideration of the Government and a final decision in the matter is expected to be taken shortly.

Defence Deal With Yugoslávia Firm

*110. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India was duped to the tune of about Rs. 28 crores in a defence deal with a Yugoslavia firm in 1991;

(b) whether this deal was found to be having the elements of a scam;

(c) if so, whether any enquiry has been made and responsibility fixed; and

(d) the results of the efforts to retrieve the money from the Yugoslavia firm?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) A Contract was signed with M/s FDSP of erstwhile Yugoslavia on 23.7.1991 for supply of 150 sets of Tank Fire Control System for T-55 Tanks. 30% of the contract value amounting to US $ 10.6 million was paid in October, 1991 against Bank Guarantee in terms of Article 4.2.1 of the Contract. However, the Contract could not be implemented due to imposition of UN sanctions on dealings with former Yugoslavia.

(b) This Equipment was selected after field-trials of various equipment conducted by the Army Hqrs on competitive basis and was stated to be the best among all the equipment fielded for trials. It would not be correct to say that this deal was having an element of a scam.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Immediately after the embargo on dealings with Yugoslavia was lifted by UN, action was taken to retrieve the money from the Yugoslavian firm. The matter has been taken up with the Government through India's Ambassador to Yugosiavia and the Ministry of External Affairs.

Chinese Naval base in Myanmar

*111. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been reported that Chinese naval officials are working on nine Myanmar naval bases inculding visits by Chinese vesles to certain islands close to the Indian coast line to monitor signal communications;

(b) if so, the details of these reports with objectives;

(c) whether such Chinese naval activities may pose a long time threat to Indian maritime security; and

(d) if so, what action is proposed to be taken to maintain friendly relations with China in view of such movements?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) As per intelligence inputs, China has been assisting Myanmar in installation of surveillance and communication systems on some of its islands in the Bay of Bengal. Chinese personnel have been visiting Myanmar naval bases in this connection. Chinese ships are also reportedly visiting Myanmar naval bases. Myanmar authorities have informed us that they do not permit any foreigh country to station its personnel or operate any facilities on its territory. They have further informed that the monitoring facilities are being utilised for surveillance of their Exclusive Economic Zone.

2. Chinese naval activities can be interpreted in terms of China's strategic interests. All developments which affect India's national security are constantly monitored and reviewed and necessary measures are taken, as required, to maintain appropriate defence preparedness.

3. In recent years, there has been improvement in India-China relations. Government is committed to the efforts of building a friendly, co-operative, good-neighbourly and mutually beneficial relationship with China in which both sides are equally responsive to each other's concerns. Government is also committed to the process of dialogue with a view to eliminating differences and creating a foundation for a stable and long-terms relationship.

राजस्थान में रेगिस्तानी भूमि को कृषि भूमि में बदला जाना

*112. श्री ओंकार सिंह लखावत: क्या ग्रामीण क्षेत्र और रोजगार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या राजस्थान को रेगिस्तानी भूमि को खेती योग्य तथा खेती के लिए उपयुक्त बनाने की कोई योजना सरकार के विचाराधीन है;

(ख) क्या इज़रायल में रेगिस्तान को जिस प्रकार विकसित कर कृषि योग्य बनाया गया है; उसी प्रकार सरकार ने रेगिस्तानी भूमि का विकास कर उसे खेती योग्य बनाने हेतु विशेषज्ञ दल का गठन किया है;

(ग) क्या इस संबंध में विशेषज्ञों का प्रतिवेदन प्राप्त हो गया है; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो इस संबंध में ब्यौरा क्या है?

ग्रामीण क्षेत्र और रोजगार मंत्रालय के राज्यमंत्री (श्री बाबागौड़ा पाटिल): (क) सूखा और मरूस्थलीकरण का सामना करने, पारिस्थितिकीय संतुलन की बहाली को प्रोत्साहन देने और भूमि, मानव और पशुओं की उत्पादकता पर प्रतिकूल जलवायु पारिस्थितियों के प्रभाव को कम करने के लिए राजस्थान के 16 जिलों के 85 ब्लाकों में मरूभूमि विकास कार्यक्रम पहले से ही कार्यान्वित किया जा रहा है।

(ख) ग्रामीण क्षेत्र और रोजगार मंत्रालय द्वारा इस प्रकार के किसी विशेषज्ञ दल का गठन नहीं किया गया है।

(ग) और (घ) प्रश्न ही नहीं उठते।

Recruitment in Armed Forces

*113. SHRI ASHOK MITRA:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of recruitments at different levels in the Army, Air Force and Navy in the years since 1991-1992;

(b) the number of recruits from each of the Eastern and North-Eastern States during these years; and

(c) whether Government propose a special drive to improve the rate of recruitment from these States, and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) 1. The recruitment of officers in the Army, Air Force and Navy is carried out on the basis of All-India Open competition. There is, therefore, no statewise allocation of vacancies in the recruitment of officers.

2. The total number of recruitments at different levels in the Army, Air Force and Navy for the year from 1991-92 to 1996-97 is given below:—

Year	Army	Air Force	Navy
1991-92	31998	6098	2330
1992-93	25991	5470	2726
1993-94	49766	4830	2509
1994-95	72235	4928	2496
1995-96	86961	4645	2487
1996-97	58385	3615	3360

3. The following numbers of Personnel Below Officer Rank (PBOR) were recruited from Eastern and North Eastern States during the period from 1991-92 to 1996-97:—

Navy

States	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
West Bengal	90	115	201	120	114	215
Bihar	143	215	176	206	283	433
Orissa	38	108	77	103	127	216
Sikkim	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assam	08	06	09	06	05	10
Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manipur	-	01	-	01	02	03
Meghalaya	01	02	-	01	03	01
Mizoram	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nagaland	-	01	01	-	-	-
Tripura	-	-	-	01	-	01